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THE DEPENDENCE OF THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' RESEARCH SKILLS FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING IN LEARNER AUTONOMY

ЗАЛЕЖНІСТЬ РІВНЯ СФОРМОВАНOSTІ НАУКОВО-ДОСЛІДНИЦЬКИХ НАВИЧОК СТУДЕНТІВ – МАЙБУТНІХ ВЧИТЕЛІВ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ВІД ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ ПРОФЕСІЙНО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ

У статті розглядаються проблеми розвитку дослідницьких навичок студентів та організації професійно-педагогічної підготовки в умовах навчальної автономії. Проблема підготовки майбутніх учителів є надзвичайно важливою, оскільки вимоги сучасної освітньої системи змінюються, і професіонали повинні вмінати швидко та ефективно адаптуватися до них. У роботі особлива увага приділяється підготовці майбутніх вчителів іноземних мов, оскільки саме вони є професіоналами, які мають бути компетентними не лише у викладанні мови, але й в інших сферах діяльності. У статті розглядаються стандарти освіти; визначається поняття дослідницьких навичок; вивчаються навчальні програми підготовки бакалаврів з філології. Зазначається, що більшість навчальних програм має оновлену версію застарілих програм, що є однією з проблем розвитку дослідницьких навичок, важливих для професійного розвитку майбутніх учителів.

У статті подано статистичний аналіз, що розкриває зв'язок між розвитком дослідницьких навичок студентів та їх навчальними досягненнями. Проаналізовано результати захисту курсових робіт, виявлено, що ускладнює отримання позитивних результатів. Навіть більше, недостатньо лише володіти певними теоретичними знаннями для написання курсової роботи, студент повинен мати достатній практичний досвід та вміння описувати результати свого дослідження.

Інформація для аналізу була зібрана в Харківському національному педагогічному університеті імені Г.С. Сковороди серед майбутніх викладачів мови (перша іноземна – англійська). На основі статистичного аналізу було прогнозовано результати захисту курсових робіт на 2 роки. Передбачається, що якщо не змінити і не оновити підхід до викладання, результати захисту курсових робіт студентів будуть продовжувати знижуватися. Найгірша ситуація з «Методикою викладання іноземної мови», оскільки це не просто теоретичний предмет. Для успішного виконання завдань потрібно пройти педагогічну практику, а це складний процес, який займає багато часу. Ще однією причиною погіршення результатів є загальна тенденція зменшення значущості вищої освіти в Україні і той факт, що освіта не гарантує майбутнє працевлаштування.

Надаються ідеї щодо подолання проблем організації досліджень студентів, а також способи оновлення навчальних програм та комплексу вправ для студентів.

Ключові слова: дослідницькі навички, навчальна автономія, професійна підготовка, методика викладання іноземної мови, вивчення мови, захист курсової роботи.

The article deals with the problem of development of students' research skills and the organization of professional and pedagogical training in learner autonomy. The problem of future teachers training is vital as the requirements in modern educational system are changing and the professionals should be able to adapt quickly and efficiently. Special attention is paid to the education of foreign language teachers as they are the professionals who should be competent not only in language teaching but in other spheres of activities. The standards of education are considered; research skills are defined, the curricula for training Bachelors in Philology were studied. It is revealed that most of the curricula have the updated version of the outdated programmes which is considered to be one of the problems of research skills development which are important for future teachers' professional development.

The article provides the statistical analysis revealing the connection between developing students' research skills and their academic achievements. The results of students' course paper defense were analyzed, revealing lack of students' research skills which makes it more difficult to obtain positive results. Moreover, it is not enough to possess particular theoretical knowledge for writing a course paper; a student has to have sufficient practice experience and the ability to describe the results of their study on paper.

The data for the analysis was collected at H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University among future language teachers whose first foreign language is English. On the basis of the statistical analysis, the results for the following years were predicted. It is assumed that, if not change and update the approach to teaching, students' results in course paper defense are to

decline. The worst situation is with "Methodology of teaching a foreign language" as it is one of the most difficult subjects as it is not purely theoretical and requires pedagogical practice which is time and effort consuming. Another reason for declining the results is general tendency of insignificance of higher education in Ukraine and the fact that education does not guarantee future employment.

Suggestions for overcoming the problems in organizing students' research are presented as well as the ways to update the curricula and sets of exercises given to the students.

Key words: research skills, learner autonomy, professional training, methodology of teaching a foreign language, language learning, course paper defense.

Introduction. The system of education in Ukraine is being on the way of reforming which is beneficial both for the teachers, who seek new forms and methods of making the educational process more effective and engaging, and for the students, who face a lot of challenges while studying.

While awaiting these changes, educators are well aware that it is extremely difficult to adapt to a new system, to reorganize the educational process, to review the standards and, as a result, to create new methods and forms of teaching on any subject. Currently, one of the most important tasks is not only to justify the changes properly, but also to demonstrate that without such changes, the educational system will not be able to reach a new level and achieve the desired standards. One consequence of this will be to lose principle role in developing the future functioning and scientific potential of the country.

The model for educating a future foreign-language teacher is also being reformed, especially the content of studies and the approaches to language acquisition and linguistic training [9]. These changes take place in higher education institutions, because it is impossible to reform school education without teachers with sufficient qualifications and appropriate skills. This does not imply that secondary school teachers no longer fit into the framework of the new Ukrainian school system. Instead, this is a question of introducing new methods and techniques that teachers need to master to improve their teaching-learning process. To train high-quality teachers, special attention should be paid to the formation of practical professional skills of teaching staff [3]. Especially since the requirements to the educators have become stricter as the teachers are expected to fit the foreseen outcomes of the system [6, 8]. We need to train the professionals who are able to adapt to modern life changes and fit the requirements of international cooperation [4, p. 14].

Analysis of relevant research. The questions of training well-qualified specialists are studied by T. Borova (2018), O. Navrotskyi (2006), H. Poliakova (2010), H. Yelnykova (2009). In learner autonomy (F. Benson (1997), H. Holec (1981), N. Koriakovzheva (2010), D. Little (1991), D. Nunan (2003), O. Solovova (2010), O. Tarnopolsky (2004)) a close attention is paid

to the problem of developing research skills by B. Feldon (2010), C. Kardash (2000), E. Lehtinen (2003), M. Murtonen (2010), I. Rosli (2010), V. Stepashko (2014). The question of a teacher and future foreign language teacher training is studied by O. Bigych (2005), N. Borisko (2010), Y. Korobova (2016), S. Nikolaeva (2011), I. Samoylyukevych (2005), N. Tuchyna (2015).

It is proved, that a student, whose major is a foreign language, can be a good specialist in the field of linguistics, but without an adequate methodological basis, they will not be able to share their knowledge.

A survey has shown that in 38 higher education institutions under observation there is no typical curriculum for training foreign language teachers. Most universities use the adapted versions of outdated programs, and thus not enough attention is drawn towards professionally oriented disciplines. But the most important drawback is that out of the four main components in the curriculum (language, linguistic, psycho-pedagogical and methodological), the methodological part is in the worst position with only 3% in the curriculum (for Bachelor degree). However, this part is crucial since future teachers have to acquire methodological competence for being successful in their professional sphere [15, p. 5–6].

Most of the curricula of Ukrainian universities organize the study of theoretical, professionally oriented and practical disciplines separately. This contradicts the main goal of learning a foreign language, which is to acquire communicative competence, and complex work on the theory and practice that is required for developing such skills [7]. Usually a foreign teacher education is based on separate aspects of language: teaching reading, studying grammar or the use of specific teaching methods [15]. But to be a language teacher is not only to acquire particular knowledge, it is also a social activity which requires a full set of emotions, feeling, behavioristic schemes. The efficiency of completing the tasks in many cases depends on the professional qualities of a teacher [2].

Aim of the Study. It is assumed, that to defend a course paper in a theoretical subject, successfully complete the studies and start the career as a demanded specialist, it is not enough to demonstrate theoretical knowledge only, but to be able to transfer theory into practice, proficiency into

creativity and to interpret materials as accurate or false. Modern technologies and information systems allow to get access to as much data as possible, although only a person who knows how to do the research well, would know how to evaluate the information [12, p. 3].

Considering the evaluation criteria on the subject “Methodology of teaching a foreign language”, the question of assessing only theoretical knowledge arises: the historical context, the development of ideas and approaches, classifications and models of methodological science. Not enough attention is paid to the practical component, which is the vital part of future professional activities of the teacher.

Moreover, in terms of university studies, the development of research skills, which ensure the transition from theoretical knowledge to creativity and motivation [12], helps to understand who of the students is more motivated to further training and self-improvement.

In terms of learner autonomy, a student who conducts a research is to participate in establishing criteria of measuring and assessing it. In this way, the students know not only what they have to do, but also what to expect, they are more involved in the studying process, boost their self-confidence.

All the above-mentioned facts determine the purpose of the article: conducting research and making analysis of the results of academic achievements of students in theoretical disciplines according to the results of course papers defense; covering the ways of developing students' research skills; showing the disadvantages of the training system of future teachers; forecasting the results of academic achievements based on the statistical analysis; providing recommendations for improving learning outcomes.

Research Methods. The data for the analysis were obtained by carrying out a research on the basis of H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University. The analysis was conducted in groups in which English is studied as the first foreign language. For conducting statistical analysis figures were selected [1, p. 130]; for constructing an econometric model 5 stages of analysis were carried out [5, p. 27-28] and the main trends of development were identified [10, p. 38, 43].

During the first step of the study the curricula for training bachelors for 2009–2013, 2010–2014, 2011–2015, 2012–2016, 2013–2017, 2014–2018 and 2015–2019 academic years were studied. Firstly, it was determined that the following tendency may be observed: during the first two years of study more attention is paid to the study of practical disciplines (practical phonetics, prac-

tical grammar, practice of oral and written English), and starting with the third academic year theoretical disciplines are added gradually (history of English, lexicology, etc.).

Secondly, the university students master two foreign languages from the first semester of the first year, but the second foreign language studies cover mainly practical disciplines, since the number of credits is fewer than for the first language.

Thirdly, by defining figures for analyzing and forecasting results, we point out that course paper in English is just a broad term. Depending on the topic, a student chooses a discipline, a branch of pedagogical or linguistic science within which the research is conducted.

Thus, analyzing the topics of students' research works, six main categories were distinguished: lexicology, stylistics, theory and practice of translation, methodology of teaching a foreign language, English literature and theoretical grammar.

Having analysed the amount of credits for each discipline, as well as the semester in which it is studied, it was determined that the number of credits for such subjects as lexicology, stylistics and theory and practice of translation decreased by 0.5 credits while comparing the 2009–2013 curriculum and all the others. The number of studying hours for literature, theoretical grammar and methodology of teaching a foreign language does not differ in the curricula.

It is also important to note that lexicology is studied in the 5th semester; stylistics, literature and methodology – in the 7th semester; theoretical grammar – in the 7th and 8th semesters; the theory and practice of translation – in the 8th semester.

While conducting their research, students receive professional assistance from the lecturers – their scientific advisors. The main thing that is taken into account in selecting the topic of the research is the students' knowledge acquired during the university studies, as well as their interests in the subject and the field of research, their life interests and preferences. The more motivated the students are, the better they do the job. The research shows that low-motivated students complete the work only when they are forced by the teacher [13].

It should be noted that the number of students who were evaluated positively varies each year (Fig. 1).

Results. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS programme. The second step was to analyze the results of the grades for the research work in each discipline. Considering the data, the central tendency is analyzed

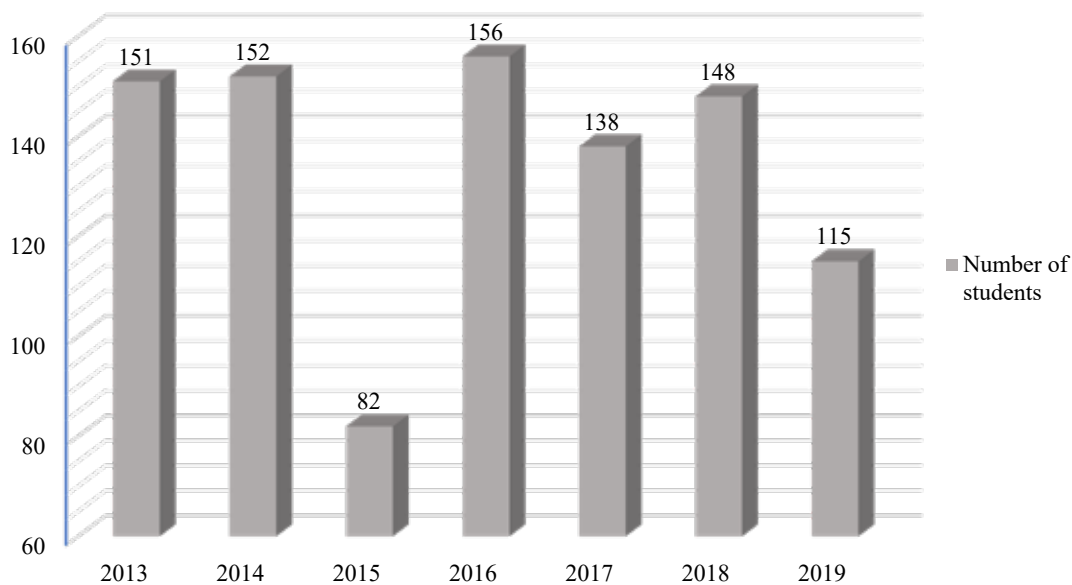


Figure 1. The number of University graduates (2013-2019)

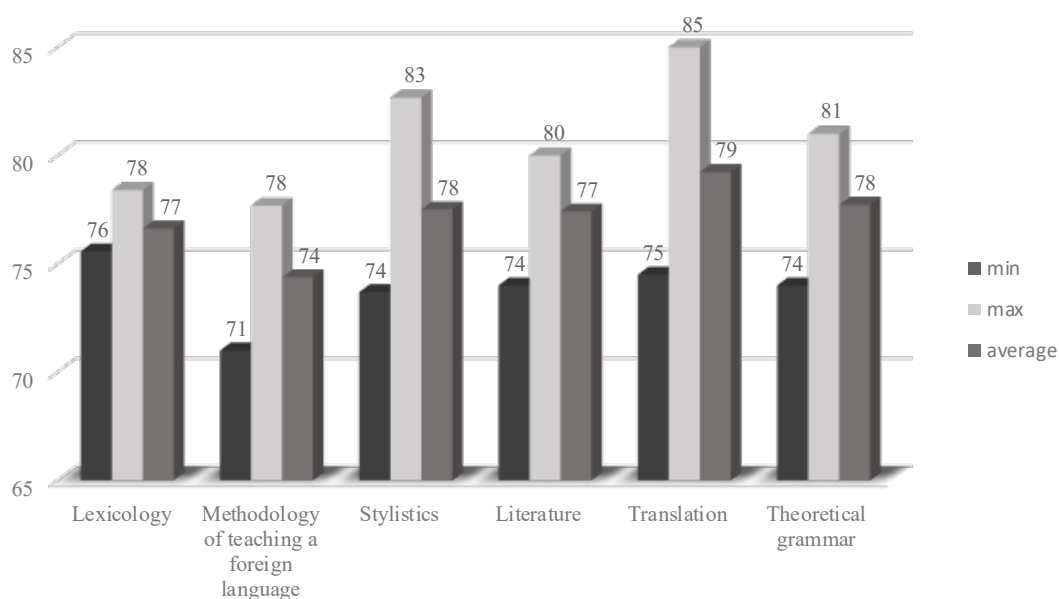


Figure 2. The lowest, the highest and the average mark in the analyzed disciplines

as a single score of its typical representatives [14, p. 159]. Thus, the attention is drawn towards the lowest and the highest mark (though average for a particular year), as well to the average mark the students get in the analyzed period in each discipline (Fig. 2).

Having considered the data, it is observed that the lowest results during the six years have been received in the methodology of teaching a foreign language. Moreover, this is the only discipline the average mark of which was less than 74 points (good) twice during an analyzed period.

The third stage of constructing a model is

defining its parameters and types. Regression equations were worked out for each discipline. The reliability of the results was checked by means of correlation analysis of the value of the determination coefficient r^2 (the closer the figure is to 1, the more adequate is the constructed model) [6, p. 49]. The following formula was used

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sigma^2}{\sigma_y^2}$$

where σ is the analysed period and σ_y is the average mark in a particular discipline.

Having checked the data, it was possible to build the econometric model and to predict the results of course paper defense for the next 2 years only for three disciplines. The coefficient of determination proved the results to be reliable for lexicology, methodology of teaching a foreign language and English literature with the corresponding data of 0,98, 0,58 and 0,6. The results are presented in Fig. 3.

While checking the determination coefficients it was proved that an econometric model cannot be built for all the disciplines as the results were lower than 0.5, therefore the constructed model

is not adequate, and its result is ambiguous [17]. Thus, for such disciplines, simple methods of forecasting (based on average annual growth rates) [11, p. 123] were used and the following results were obtained (Fig. 4).

The conducted analysis has shown that a general tendency can be observed. It shows that the level of the students' academic achievements will reduce. This is not directly connected with the discipline or the field of research. It may be suggested that, firstly, this happens due to the decline of the significance of the role of higher education in the country. More and more students are

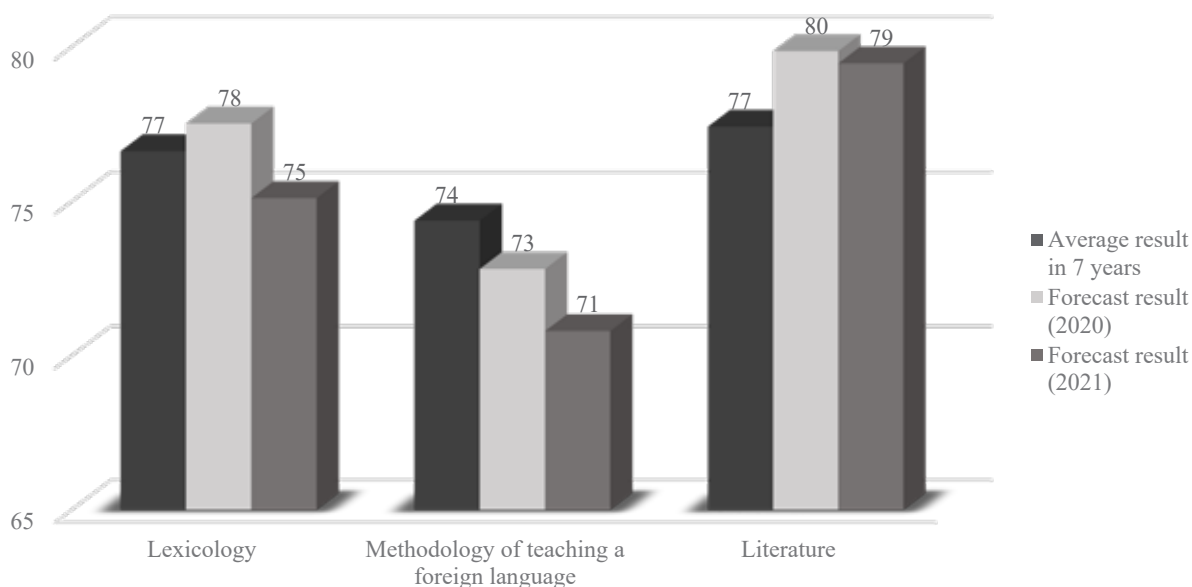


Figure 3. Course paper defense results prediction based on an econometric model

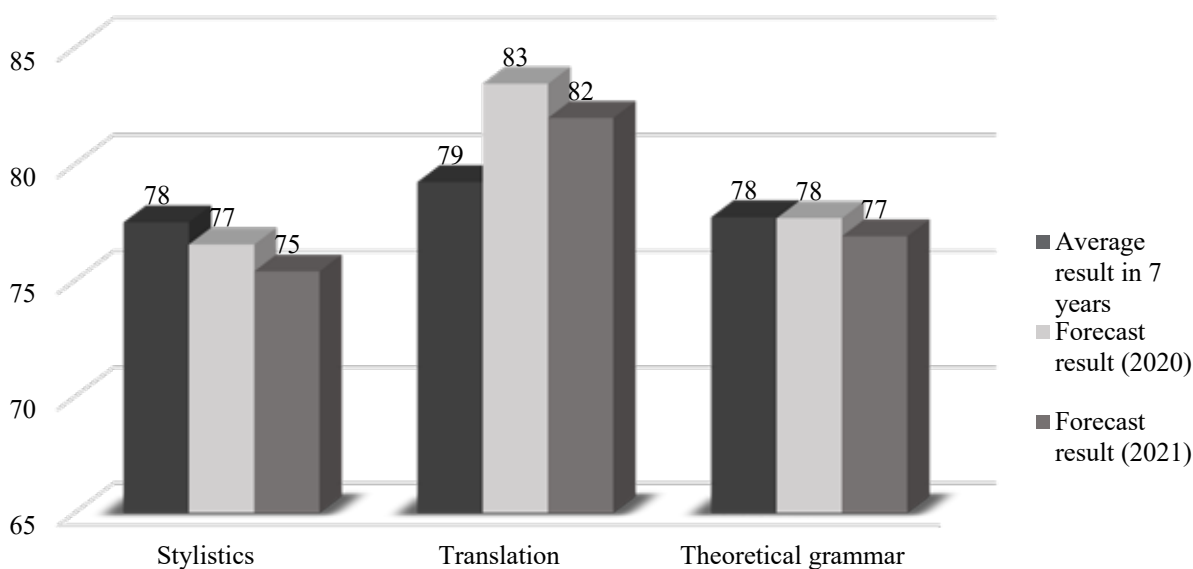


Figure 4. Course paper defense results prediction based on simple methods of forecasting

willing to believe that higher education and qualifications do not guarantee successful employment and future career, that's why the quality of the completed work is decreasing. Secondly, the social and economic situation in the country forces young people to start working at an early age, which means they do not have time to pay enough attention to studying, training, preparing and developing their own scientific potential.

In addition, writing a course paper is a complex process that requires profound background knowledge and research skills, thorough preparation as well as concentration, focus and interest. Any kind of project work helps to motivate the students to future research activities and enables them to complete other tasks easier [6, p. 89], that's why when choosing a topic, a student often considers it to be another simple task, a "grand" essay that can be written in a day or two. Furthermore, there are many non-studying reasons (both objective and subjective) that can affect the final result (the Internet, new interests and acquaintances, family problems or personal life).

The forecast has shown that the lowest results will be obtained in the discipline "Methodology of teaching a foreign language", which brings us back to the results of the pre-experimental study of "New Generation School Teacher" project: the methodological component of the educational training of students is not sufficiently developed. During the lessons a lot of attention is paid to the theoretical component. Students have the opportunity to test their own competence during school practice for 4–5 weeks (2–3 lessons per week) only in the eighth semester.

A course paper consists of three sections, one of which is methodological, that is, the researcher must offer/design activities or make up their own lessons. For students, whose research field is methodology of teaching a foreign language, this task is one of the most difficult, since they do not only have to design a set of activities, but also test them in practice. Thus, a young researcher, being acquainted only with methodological basis of preparing a lesson in the seventh semester, should not only make up his/her own experiment, but also perform it during the practice, having, on average, 15 lessons at school.

Another factor that will affect the quality of the results is that, when starting their teaching practice, a future teacher cannot implement an experimental model from the first lesson: a period of adaptation should take place, and the created model will need to be modified according to educational and psychological needs of the schoolchildren. This means that there is no time for an extensive research which would have credible results.

Moreover, students lack the requiring research skills as the curriculum is not aimed at developing them. Students may be ready to conduct a research but they are not familiar with its format as the educational process is not sufficiently organized.

Conclusions. Considering the results of the statistical analysis, in order to improve the forecast results for educational institutions training future teachers, it is recommended to offer tasks aimed at development of students' research skills while studying different disciplines; to teach students to create and adapt materials for the lessons; to explain the importance of analyzing the obtained results, to teach them to make conclusions; to participate in conferences and contests. We also suggest that a scientific adviser for research work has to be chosen long before writing a course paper. Working under proficient supervision for a certain period of time will help the students understand the value of the research itself, form the basic skills, train to write articles, experience a sense of achievement from the scientific work. Moreover, seeing the real process of research from the inside, the future teachers and scholars will get motivated and ready to study as well as develop new ideas [12, p. 88–89].

When creating a curriculum, it should be remembered that the methodological basis is extremely important for the future teacher. The competence that is developed at the university will be the basis for successful professional activity as well as for further self-improvement and professional development.

Thus, the teacher of a new Ukrainian school must be able to adapt quickly to the changes in the system of education, to be open to implementing new ideas and techniques, and to seek and master new types of activities and tasks. Learning from their own experience and the experience of others, each teacher develops their professional competence. Studying certain professionally oriented disciplines creates a foundation built under the supervision of experienced teachers who instruct and assist their future colleagues, facilitating their research process.

Being a good researcher is beneficial for the students' future career in any working sphere. They have an opportunity to show their creativity, find an innovative approach and contribute to the professional skills.

The work under consideration is an individual research. We suggest students have more creative tasks connected with a research, when they can work in groups. The exchange of ideas and constant cooperation teaches them to collect data, use research skills techniques? Train to plan and implement their ideas into practice, learn about doing a research itself.

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